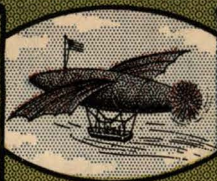


FRANK READE



WEEKLY MAGAZINE.

Containing Stories of Adventures on Land, Sea & in the Air.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year Application made for Second-Class Entry at N. Y. Post-Office.

No. 12.

36

NEW YORK, JANUARY 16, 1903.

Price 5 Cents.

FIGHTING THE SLAVE HUNTERS; OR, FRANK READE, JR., IN CENTRAL AFRICA.

By "NONAME."



Down through the line of M'bokis went the Vendetta. Frank tried hard to reach the white traders. If he could have done so, he would gladly have crushed them also. But Hardinger and his gang foresaw their peril.

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Fighting the Slave Hunters :

OR,

Frank Reade, Jr., in Central Africa.

By "NONAME."

CHAPTER I.

A STORY OF OPPRESSION.

"Land ho!"

The cry reached the ears of those upon the deck of a snug, trim, little steamer which carried the American flag at her masthead.

She was cleaving the waters of the South Atlantic, and a month previous had left the port of New York, U. S. A., bound for the Congo Free States, on the west coast of Africa.

From keelson to masthead she was a model of perfect beauty. There was no disputing this fact.

Captain Haynes, of the Yankee Girl, which was the name of the steamer, was not slow in answering the lookout's hail.

"Where away?" he shouted.

"Dead to windward!" replied the lookout. "Keep a course sou'-sou'west!"

The man at the wheel laid the ship's bow over a trifle. Then with his glass Haynes plainly descried the distant coast line.

"Right!" he cried. "It is the African coast at last!"

A tall, handsome and distinguished-looking young man at his side said:

"Ah, Captain Haynes, you really think it is the African coast?"

"I do, Mr. Reade!" replied the bluff captain. "Just take this glass and you can get a good look at it!"

"Thank you!"

The young man took the proffered glass and studied the distant line of land. As he stood there upon the bridge he made a handsome picture.

Indeed, he was one to attract attention anywhere, not more from physical than mental gifts.

The world over—he was known. His name and his famous exploits were the talk of all tongues.

For, let the reader know, he was no other than Frank Reade, Jr., the famous inventor of airships and submarine boats.

No prettier town was there in all America than Readestown, the home of the young inventor, and where were the machine shops in which he manufactured his inventions.

His father had been an inventor before him and had traveled the world over.

It was natural that young Frank should follow in his footprints.

But no doubt the reader is curious to know just why Frank Reade, Jr., is in this part of the world aboard the steamer Yankee Girl.

His mission was one of a very important and philanthropic kind.

In order to explain it fully we will be compelled to take the reader for a brief while back to America.

One day a man alighted from the cars in Readestown and entering a carriage was driven to the residence of the young inventor.

He was ushered into Frank's presence, extending a card which read:

"NICHOLAS VAN DYKE, Cape Town, Africa."

Frank Reade, Jr., read the card and then gave the gentleman a critical gaze.

The result was evidently favorable, for he said, politely:

"Pray have a chair, Mr. Van Dyke. What can I do for you?"

The visitor sat down.

"After I have explained to you the motive of my visit, Mr. Reade," he said, frankly, "you can then understand better."

"Very well."

Nicholas Van Dyke was a man not more than forty years of age, with a noble cast of features and finely knit form.

"First, I will say," he exclaimed, "that I am a traveler in all senses of the word. I travel for study and for pleasure. For a year past I have sojourned in Cape Town."

"Indeed!" said Frank, pleasantly. "Then you are far from home?"

"Rather; but let me go on. In my travels in Africa, I have come across an adventure which cannot help but thrill you when you hear it.

"I had been on an extended tour up into the Congo ivory country, when one day in traveling through the jungles I met with a queer procession.

"First, there came a dozen or more white men, and I saw at once by their color that they were Europeans.

"After them followed several hundred armed natives of the M'boki tribe, a fierce and warlike set, and who are hand-in-glove with the villainous Portuguese who handle the slave trade.

"I had heard much of the slave hunter, but this was the first time I had ever come across any of their ilk.

"That they were slave hunters I quickly saw, for in their midst there were half a hundred wretched souls with manacles upon their wrists, and their backs bleeding with the blows of the lash."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Frank Reade, Jr., "that is awful!"

"You may well say that. Indeed, my heart was filled with pity."

"I do not wonder. What did you do about it?"

"Do? Ah! that is what I must tell you. I was much excited and addressed the white men angrily. To my surprise and horror I found that they were all Englishmen."

"Englishmen engaged in slave trading?"

"That is true."

"It is strange!"

"Nevertheless it is true. I addressed the leader of the party sharply. He was a tall, dark-browed fellow, and he answered me in a surly fashion.

"I asked him what he meant by such nefarious work and he coolly informed me that he did not consider any of my affairs.

"I took a look at the slaves. To my surprise they were far from being black. Indeed, their skin was almost as white as my own, and their features of a rare type of beauty and intelligence.

"Among them were several delicate-looking women. They looked at me mutely, appealingly.

"For this, Hardinger, which was the name the leader of the slave traders had given me, stepped up and spoke sharp words, and then brutally struck one of them senseless to the ground.

"This was more than I could stand. I faced the brute.

"Hound! I cried, madly, 'what impelled you to do such a thing as that?'

"What is that to you?" he retorted.

"It is a brutal act."

"What will you do about it?"

"This is what I will do!"

"Then I struck the villain to my feet with a blow of my fist. It was the signal for strife.

"I felt a twinge in the arm. A bullet had passed through the muscles. Others rang past my ears.

"Then I saw the gang coming for me. I was desperate.

"My black bodyguard of fifty men from the banks of the Zambesi stood by me valiantly.

"They hurled themselves fiercely upon the foe. Some of them liberated the white slaves and our forces were augmented.

"The result was that we scattered the villainous slave traders and liberated the poor Mamboulis, for that was their name.

"Hardinger and his gang retreated to a safe point. Then one of my men who knew their language talked with them.

"The Mamboulis are a peaceful and industrious tribe near the head waters of the Congo.

"They are skilled farmers and have attained a point nearer to civilization than any other African tribe.

"But of late the gang of slave hunters under Solomon Hardinger had carried away hundreds of their best people. Aided by the fierce M'bokis, the Englishmen were able in all cases to defeat the Mamboulis, and entering the village they made captives by the hundred."

Van Dyke here paused for a moment. Frank Reade, Jr., had been an attentive listener.

"It is outrageous!" he declared, positively. "Those villains should be summarily dealt with."

Van Dyke leaned forward.

"Your hand, Mr. Reade," he said, warmly. "I knew those would be your sentiments. This is what I have come to see you about!"

"Indeed! In what manner can I aid you?"

"You can aid me more than any army which England or America might send out."

Frank looked surprised.

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. The slave trade must in some manner be stopped. I am more interested in this intelligent race of Mamboulis than I can say in words, and I cannot bear to think of their being so brutally crushed out of existence as a nation. I have pledged myself to save them!"

Frank gazed steadily at Van Dyke.

"And you want me to help you?"

"Yes!"

"In what manner do you think I can crush the slave traders better than you?"

"Why—you have inventions which will enable you to penetrate with safety into the very heart of that peril-infested region. One of your airships for instance."

Frank shook his head.

"I have no airship at present."

Van Dyke's face fell.

He arose and advancing to Frank's side took his hand, saying, earnestly:

"Do not refuse to help me, Mr. Reade. Much depends!"

Frank Reade, Jr., drew a deep breath and arose to his feet.

His eyes shone with a peculiar inspiration as he said:

"Mr. Van Dyke, I am more interested in your project than words can tell. You have excited my deepest sympathy and I will promise to help you."

A cry of intense joy escaped Van Dyke's lips.

"Hurrah!" he shouted. "I have now no doubt but that we shall defeat Hardinger's gang. God bless you, Mr. Reade!"

But Frank took his arm and said:

"Come this way and I will show you in what manner I am able to carry out the project you suggest."

Without a word Van Dyke obeyed.

Down through the garden, when once outside the house, they went.

There was a path leading in this way directly down to the machine shops.

Here in a broad yard the two men came upon a machine the like of which Van Dyke had never before seen.

"This is my latest invention," said Frank Reade, Jr., explanatively. "And in certain respects it eclipses all others."

"Indeed!" cried Van Dyke. "From its appearance it is a marvel."

"Let me explain its mechanism to you."

The machine was in the shape of a dome-like roof upon a flat and broad platform of steel which was set upon four wheels.

There were two decks to the structure, one railed in and running completely around the base of the dome or shell, which was of some light metal allied to steel and bullet proof.

The second deck was upon the top of the shell, and was also protected by high rails. This deck could be more properly called a bridge. From it a ladder led down to the deck below over the surface of the shell.

In the shell there were circular windows like dead eyes, five upon each side. Beneath them at intervals were doors made of plates of steel.

In the forward part of the shell was a porthole, through which protruded the muzzle of a gun.

The rear porthole also showed the muzzle of another gun. These guns were of a new pattern, firing dynamite bombs, and an invention of Frank Reade, Jr.'s.

Above all was a dome-shaped pilot-house, with windows of thickest plate glass. At the end of the bridge was a powerful electric searchlight.

Forward was a pilot like those used on a steam locomotive, and a long, sharp steel ram.

The wheels were broad, tired with corrugated tires, and upon the hubs were keen, scythe-like knives.

The Vendetta, for this was the name of the machine, was a destructive creation, judging from its looks.

This was the exterior appearance of the Vendetta.

Frank Reade, Jr., now proceeded to show his visitor the interior.

Entering the shell, a richly furnished compartment or cabin was seen.

This was fitted up luxuriously and contained a library of

choice books, a cabinet of scientific instruments and many other things.

A table in the centre was decorated with rich silverware. Upon the walls were racks in which were hung rifles and other weapons.

Beyond the cabin was the engine room.

This was compact and unique in its arrangement. The machinery was all light and elegant but powerful.

Electricity was the motive power, and there were powerful driving rods to revolve the axles of the machine.

In the tower, which was reached by means of winding stairs, there was a wheel which controlled the forward axle of the carriage.

Also there were little push buttons, knobs and keys, all with some purpose in view.

Everything was in unison, and skillfully put together to make a complete and wonderful mechanical whole.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE AFRICAN COAST.

The electric Vendetta was truly a most marvelous invention.

Van Dyke examined it with care and deep interest.

"How is it, Mr. Reade," he asked, finally, "that you can expect to travel over rough ground with the Vendetta?"

"I do not expect that," replied Frank, promptly, "but the Vendetta can climb hills easily and travel over quite an uneven surface. Of course, huge bowlders or sheer descents would baffle it."

"Well!" exclaimed Van Dyke, rubbing his hands, "I don't think we need to fear much on that score. That part of Africa which we shall visit is mostly all a level tract of country."

"That will be all the better," declared Frank. "We can travel with greater ease."

With this the interview closed.

Arrangements were quickly made to start at the earliest possible day for Africa.

Of course, it was necessary to take the Vendetta thither aboard ship, and Van Dyke succeeded in engaging a snug little steamer to transport the Vendetta and the party to the mouth of the Congo.

Thus it happens that at the opening of our story we find the Yankee Girl off the coast of Africa.

Captain Haynes and Frank Reade, Jr., were studying the coast line with a glass.

They were thus engaged when Van Dyke came out of the cabin.

"Here, Van Dyke!" cried Frank, eagerly, "we have sighted the coast!"

At once Van Dyke was interested.

"You don't mean it?"

"Yes, I do!"

Van Dyke accepted the proffered glass and regarded the distant coast.

No little excitement was now created on board.

The crew all climbed into the rigging, and out of the cabin bounced two comical-looking characters.

One was a broad-shouldered Irishman and the other was a diminutive and comical-looking darky.

"Begorra, av it's thru that we've med the land, it's roigin glad I am av that!" cried the Celt, with a rich brogue. "Shure I niver was so sick av the say afore since the ditty me mudder brought me in at Castle Garden!"

"Golly fo' glory!" cried the darky, executing a double shuffle. "Jes' yo' gib dis chile one lily bit ob a chance to get ashore. He don' stay dar fo' one while."

The Celt gave the darky a poke in the ribs.

"Whurroo!" he yelled, "have yez river considhered the fact that yez are comin' back to yu're native counthrinaygur?"

The darky lowered his head like a flash and gave the Celt a poke in the stomach with his head which caused him to sit down solid upon the deck.

"Don' yo' fool wif dis chile!" he roared. "I jes' gib yo' one yo' won't like. Take dat, yo' I'ish loafah!"

"Murther! It's kilt I am intoirely!" roared the Irishman.

But Frank Reade, Jr., turned around and said, sternly:

"Barney and Pomp, you rascals! Cease your joking. You make more clatter than your necks are worth!"

This sobered the two faithful servitors of the famous inventor.

For such they were.

The world over, they were scarcely less known than their master.

Upon all of Frank Reade, Jr.'s famous trips they had accompanied him and many were the thrilling experiences they could recount.

Indeed, the young inventor would hardly have been able to do without their valued services.

Captain Haynes now changed the steamer's course and lay in toward the coast.

Soon a fair view of the coast could be had, and the high cliffs and waving palms gave no doubt that this was indeed a tropical coast.

Bearings were taken and it was found that they were but a short distance from the mouth of the Congo.

It had been decided for politic reasons not to make a landing in the mouth of the river or any place where the act could be observed.

There was a small harbor not far distant of which Captain Haynes knew.

It was a spot remote from habitation and here it was decided to land the Vendetta.

Accordingly the ship proceeded thither. At length swinging around a headland she cast anchor.

Extensive preparations were at once begun for the landing of the Vendetta.

As there were no boats aboard large enough to hold her, it had been arranged to have her floated ashore.

There were skilled mechanics aboard the Vendetta, whom Frank Reade, Jr., had brought from America.

As soon as the sections were landed the air was broken with the ring of hammers as they went at work to put the machine together.

This required a day of patient work.

Then supplies were put aboard the Vendetta and it was in full readiness for its journey.

Into the heart of Central Africa it was to penetrate.

Frank Reade, Jr., Barney and Pomp, and Nicholas Van Dyke shook hands with their companions of the Yankee Girl.

"Name the date when I shall come after you," said Captain Haynes. "Of course you will not stay here forever."

"By no means," replied Frank. "It will take me just six weeks to thrash the slave traders and rid the country of them."

"I will be here with the Yankee Girl in six weeks."

"Of course I may not be right on time."

"That is all right. I will wait here until you come."

"That settles it!"

The crew of the Yankee Girl cheered, and then rowed back to the steamer.

Captain Haynes fired the bow gun of the steamer.

It made quite a loud report, but Frank Reade, Jr., smiled.

"I will give them a salute," he said.

He went to the forward pneumatic gun of the Vendetta.

Distant three hundred yards along the coast was a corner of the cliff which jutted out over the sea.

Frank took careful aim for this and pulled the electric key open.

There was a hissing of air, a dull shock as the dynamite projectile left the gun.

It struck the face of the cliff full and fair, and there was a mighty roar which was deafening.

The corner of the cliff crumbled away in fine powder.

It was a sublime spectacle and a royal salute.

The small guns of the Yankee Girl could hardly hope to equal it.

But the little steamer now dropped out of the bay.

Those on shore stood and watched her until she was a mere speck upon the broad surface of the sea.

Then Frank Reade, Jr., cried:

"Come! We must be off!"

All sprung aboard the Vendetta.

Frank went into the pilot-house and started the engines.

They worked like a clock.

The Vendetta glided along the shore with the ease of a bird.

There was presently found a break in the wall of the cliff.

The Vendetta made its way thus to the higher ground above.

Arrived upon the summit of the cliff, a marvelous scene was spread to view.

Seaward lay the waste of tossing waters.

Inland, there stretched away for miles a broad and level plain, covered with short-cropped verdure.

It was a vast buffalo range, and not a mile distant a herd of the African type could be seen.

Beyond the plain there were visible jungles and forest, and far in the distance lay a broad valley between mighty mountain chains.

Van Dyke pointed in that direction.

"Through that valley," he declared, "is the wonderful land of the Mamboulis. It is not more than two hundred miles from here!"

"If that is all," cried Frank, "and we have anything like clear sailing as it seems here, we will soon make it."

"Good! Let us be off!"

"We are apt to encounter the enemy, by the way, are we?"

"Yes."

"Then let us be prepared for them. Barney, see that both pneumatic guns are ready, and Pomp, look to the rifles and ammunition!"

"A'right, sah!" replied Pomp.

"Yis, sor!" returned Barney.

Then the Vendetta started on her way.

Away over the plain she bowled at full speed.

The wonderful expedition had begun, and thrilling episodes were in store for the quartette of hardy adventurers.

CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE ON THE PLAIN.

The Vendetta made good time over the plain.

But almost at the start the party were destined to experience thrilling adventures.

Frank Reade, Jr., was in the pilot-house, keeping the machine steady on its course.

Barney was doing a double shuffle on the forward deck, and Pomp was twanging a banjo in a merry fashion.

Van Dyke was upon the bridge, and lost in contemplation of the country.

Miles had passed by, and the undulating country had hid the broad expanse of the sea from view.

In the distance there was visible a long line of jungle.

Toward this the Vendetta seemed to be making its way.

Suddenly a sharp cry escaped the lips of Van Dyke.

"Look yonder, Mr. Reade!" he cried, wildly. "Do you see that smoke?"

Frank saw a cloud of white smoke hanging in the air beyond a distant knoll.

Then the crack of firearms could be heard.

Van Dyke came rushing into the pilot-house of the Vendetta.

He was much excited.

"What is it, Mr. Reade?" he cried. "What do you call it?"

"It is some kind of a fight," declared Frank, with forced calmness.

"You think so?"

"Yes, the smoke and the crack of rifles is evidence of that."

"So it would seem," said Van Dyke, doubtfully. "Yet it may be wild animals they are shooting."

"No," said Frank, positively. "See how that line of smoke extends to right angles? It is a line of battle."

Van Dyke looked in a keen, questioning way at Frank.

"You believe that?" he said, brusquely.

"I do."

"Who are the combatants?"

"Some rascally gang of natives and a party of white men, perhaps explorers, and perhaps slave hunters. That remains to be seen."

"Shall we investigate?"

"By all means."

All on board the Vendetta were much excited.

Barney and Pomp were spoiling for a fight. They could not wait for the Vendetta to reach the spot.

"Begorra, av it's any av the slave hunters we'll mighty quick spile 'em!" he cried. "Shure, an' wan crack av the electhric gun wud do that!"

"Yo' am jes' right, I'ish!" agreed Pomp.

The Vendetta raced across the level plain like a bird.

In a short space of time it had topped the rise of land and a thrilling scene was spread to view.

In a sort of depression which extended even to the verge of the jungle there were a group of men and oxen.

It was plainly a traveling party, and at least a dozen of them were white men.

The other half hundred were natives. They were drawn up in a semi-circle and were shielded by an earth breastwork hastily thrown up.

They were loading and firing as rapidly as they could.

Their foes seemed to be in a line of palms just opposite and they were hurling arrows and javelins in a cloud at the breastworks.

The natives were, some of them, visible, and Van Dyke exclaimed, in an excited manner:

"I verily believe those fellows are M'bokis. If so, they are fierce and desperate fighters."

"I don't care how fierce and desperate they are," said Frank. "I can blow them all to pieces if I choose."

"Certainly," agreed Van Dyke; "but it is a hard outlook for that party of travelers, whoever they may be."

"We will soon make it easier for them."

"Good enough!"

Frank, however, had barely uttered these words when a warning cry came from Barney.

"Luk out, Misther Reade! Shure, there's danger ahead av us!"

"Danger!" exclaimed Frank, switching off the current. "What is it?"

But the Celt's warning had come too late.

Just at that moment there was a slight wavering, a dull shock, and then every man on board was thrown from his feet.

The Vendetta had come to a dead stop. Her cabin floor and the deck were pitched at a high angle.

What did it mean?

It required only a moment for Frank Reade, Jr., to get out of the pilot-house at once.

Then he saw at a glance just what the difficulty was. The machine had run into a small quag which could hardly be seen until close upon it.

This had lowered the Vendetta's bow until she was nose and all deep in the mire.

Even the muzzle of the electric gun was deeply buried in the mud.

It was with difficulty that the crew of the Vendetta could maintain an upright position on her slanting deck.

Of course the electric machinery had ceased to work the moment she plunged into the mire.

What was to be done?

Here was a nice dilemma.

Frank went into the pilot-house and reversed the electrical engines. But it was of no use.

There was not sufficient power to start the Vendetta out of the mire.

The only way possible seemed to be to either drain the quag, and wait for it to dry up, or dig the machine out by hard work.

The adventurers looked at each other aghast. Barney was the first to speak.

"Be me sowl, it's a corker!" he exclaimed, scratching his head in utter bewilderment. "Phwat the divil will we do?"

"Get her out!" said Van Dyke, in his laconic way.

"That will take time," said Frank.

"Golly, I done fink if dem natives should happen fo' to attack us, it would bes' be a hard 'nuff fing!" said Pomp, apprehensively.

"By Jupiter, that is so!" said Van Dyke, anxiously. "It's all up with us, I fear, if they do."

The situation did indeed look critical enough.

The M'bokis and the white travelers were having it hot and heavy.

The natives had not the advantage of the deadly repeating rifles, but they were legion in numbers.

The contestants had seen the arrival of the Vendetta, and for a moment there was a lull in the fighting.

It was evident that both sides were surprised and interested in the sudden and unlooked-for appearance of this wonderful machine.

A cheer went up from the whites, and a signal flag was displayed. Then the fight went on more bitter than ever.

While the Vendetta's party viewed it with varied emotions.

But what else could they do?

They seemed powerless to help the beleaguered party below. Frank Reade, Jr., was fertile in expedients.

"Come!" he cried. "Our first move is to get the Vendetta out of the mud!"

"Right!" cried Van Dyke. "Take hold, everybody!"

None were loth to do this.

But before anything could be done in this direction a man was seen approaching with a white flag upheld.

He was a truce bearer from the camp of the besieged travelers.

It was easily seen that he was a European and apparently an Englishman. Frank Reade, Jr., stepped forward and made amicable signs as he came up.

"Stranger, hullo!" he shouted. "Do you speak English?"

"Of course we do!" returned Frank.

"Good! We are glad to meet you. Are you English?"

"No, we are Americans," replied the young American.

"It is all the same in this country. We are friends."

"Heaven be praised!" replied the truce bearer, coming nearer. "It seems good even to meet people who speak our own language in this God-forsaken clime."

"I can understand your feelings, sir," replied Frank; "but you seem in a hard place."

"We are attacked by the fiercest tribe of natives in Africa. We are fighting for our lives."

"So I perceive. You need help?"

"Yes."

"We will help you, and but for our accident here we could have terminated the contest in very quick time. You see, our machine has her forward wheels in the mud and we cannot use our electric gun."

The truce bearer rubbed his eyes.

"It's powerful queer," he declared; "but what sort of a machine do you call that, I'd like to ask?"

"It is an electric road carriage," replied Frank. "It is constructed for the purpose of safe travel in a danger-infested country."

"What! Then you travel aboard of it?"

"Yes."

"What is it made of?"

"Principally steel."

"Bullet proof?"

"Oh, yes!"

"And you can travel around the country in it? By Jove! but it is a rich idea. But what is the motive power?"

"Electricity."

"You don't say!"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, I don't see what hinders you from going anywhere safely."

"We can."

"That gun goes by electricity too, does it?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'll be hanged! What's your name, may I ask?"

"Frank Reade, Jr."

The truce bearer gave a prolonged whistle, and gasped:

"You don't mean it? Why, I have heard your name much in scientific journals."

"I daresay," replied Frank, with a laugh. "Those chaps are always writing me up."

"What have you come to Africa for, I'd like to ask?"

"To fight the slave hunters and the M'bokis who are making life miserable for the Mamboulis."

The truce bearer dropped his flag and came rushing forward with hands outstretched.

"God bless you!" he cried. "You will be earning a heavenly reward if you do that. I know all about the persecuted Mamboulis. They need a champion!"

"Well, I'll be their champion," said Frank, grimly; "but I am glad to meet you, sir. Come up and I will show you the Vendetta."

This Frank proceeded to do. The fellow was deeply interested. He drew a deep breath at the end and said:

"You can fight safely all the tribes in Africa. I wish you success!"

He started to return, but Frank restrained him.

"We have told you the truth about ourselves," he said. "Now, perhaps, you will favor us with an explanation of your mission in this country."

"Certainly I will!" replied the truce bearer, readily.

CHAPTER IV.

THE COLONISTS.

Everybody was interested to hear the story from the truce bearer's lips.

"Our expedition is in the interests of a colony!" he declared. "Certain wealthy Londoners have interested themselves in this region."

"As you know there are many poverty-afflicted people in the slums of London and other large cities. The most of these are Irish, who are held down mainly by the fact that they are unable to make a living on their native soil owing to the oppression of the British landlord."

"Whurroo!" cried Barney, at this juncture. "Shure, an' that's the most truthful thing yez iver uttered."

The truce bearer's eyes twinkled.

"Ah, you're one of the oppressed of Ireland, are you?"

"Divil a bit!" cried Barney. "But, shure, I've cousins enough there what are. Shure, I'm a free American citizen, but me heart aches fer ould Ireland jist the same."

"Good for you!" cried the truce bearer. "I'm an Irishman myself, though I was educated in England, at Oxford, and I do not use the brogue."

"The deuce ye are!" cried Barney, grasping the other's hand. "Is it a Mc or an O' that yez may be?"

"My name is Dennis McFadden. My father's home in Cork, and——"

"Tare an' 'ounds!" gasped Barney, "then yez are of McFaddens of Cork?"

"Yes."

"They be gintlemin ivery bit. Shure, an' I'm Bar O'Shea, an' the O'Sheas are lineal descindants from Brian Boru, as iverybody in Oireland knows."

"The O'Sheas are of the best blood in Ireland, barr the McFaddens!" replied the truce bearer.

"Not a bit av difference atwixt us!" cried Barney; "shure we needn't care for the best av 'em. But, Mister McFadden, I'm glad to see ye an' proud to know ye!"

"And I am glad to meet the descendant of so noble a family," said McFadden, with a profound bow.

"And are they good Oirishmen that are foightin' wid down yonder?" asked Barney.

"Every man of them!"

"An' who be the leaders?"

"Well, there is Michael Devine, with as good a brogue as yours."

"May the Lord love him!"

"And Jerry O'Brien and Felix Rourke."

"Shure, they're good Oirish names!"

"Every man of them is a true-born Irishman. They are all members of the Land League."

"Whurroo!" screamed Barney, flourishing a blackthorn. "Liberty for ould Oireland! Down wid ther British yoke!"

But McFadden shook his head, sadly.

"Ah, no!" he said. "The wisest of our people have given up all hope of ever securing freedom for Ireland. But there is one thing which the Irish people can do."

"An' phwat's that?" asked Barney.

"Start a New Ireland in another part of the world. Ireland wouldn't be long before she could be powerful enough to hold her own with the best nations of the world. Let every true Irishman leave Ireland and England, and what would become of the British army and navy?"

Barney stood for a moment like one in a daze.

"Shure, yez don't mane that?" he cried. "Wud yez ask thur Oirishmen to lave the Killarney hills an' lakes an' the Blarney stone an' the foine city av Dublin to the British? They'd niver do that!"

"Ah, but what else can they do?" cried McFadden; "they are under the British yoke now."

"Thin that's phwat yez are in this counthry for?"

"To be sure. We are looking for a good place to found an Irish colony to be called New Ireland. We expect to make of it an Utopia for the most down-trodden people upon

the face of the earth. We are backed by some of the wealthiest Irishmen in London and Dublin."

McFadden spoke with earnestness and conviction.

"Indeed, it looks like a right good scheme," declared Frank Reade, Jr. "It may be the best solution of Ireland's wrongs."

"That is so!" agreed Van Dyke.

"It is our belief that we can bring every true Irishman in the world to our colony," declared McFadden. "It shall be one place on earth where all true Irishmen can live and enjoy their rights according to their own ideas."

"Bejabers, that sounds well!" cried Barney. "An' that's what yez are in this counthry for, are yez?"

"This is our mission."

"Well," declared Frank Reade, Jr., "we certainly wish you the best of success."

"Thank you!" replied McFadden.

But Barney scratched his head and looked roguishly at Pomp.

"Bejabers, an' phwat will become av the naygurs thin, wid the hull av Oireland moved to Africky? On me sowl, here'll niver be room fer the both av us!"

"Huh!" sniffed Pomp; "don' yo' fret 'bout dat. All de educated colored people am gwine fo' to stay in de United States. We jes' leaves our cast-off things fo' de I'ish people."

This was too much for Barney.

The two servitors were always engaged in joking each other.

But this jest was a little too pungent to suit the hot-tempered Celt. He grabbed a tuft of bunch grass, and pulling it up, roots and all, flung it at Pomp.

The darky's mouth had been wide open in loud laughter at the Celt.

The result was that the tuft of grass caught him full in that cavernous organ. For a moment he was rolling over upon the ground, choking and gasping in a bewildered fashion.

But if Pomp had got a bad dose he was quickly accorded a sweet revenge.

When Barney grabbed the tuft of grass he had not noted the fact that deeply concealed in the grass there was a huge bee of a peculiar African species and with a stinger like a knife.

He had pressed the bee in his hand with the result that the insect, resenting the treatment, had given him the full benefit of the sting.

For a moment the Celt thought he was dying.

The agony was intense.

Then he gave a leap in the air and his voluble tongue became unloosed.

A perfect torrent of adjectives rolled off his lips.

"Tare an' 'ounds! Murther! I'm kilt! I'm kilt! Ow-ow-ouch! Whurroo! Mither Mary presarve us! It's kilt I am intoirely!"

Of course the acute pain of the sting was over in a moment, but Barney's hand swelled up greatly.

He rushed aboard the Vendetta, and Van Dyke followed to assist him in binding the wound, for serious results had often been known to result from the sting of this species of bee.

Pomp had recovered and was convulsed with laughter to think that he had got the best of Barney.

McFadden, the truce bearer, had laughed until his sides ached.

Even Frank himself saw the affair in a humorous light, but very speedily other more serious things claimed the attention of all.

The M'bokis had suddenly resumed the attack upon the colonists.

McFadden's compatriots had again opened fire.

Once more the air was filled with flying arrows and javelins.

And now Frank Reade, Jr., saw the mistake that had been made in wasting so much time in the parley with McFadden.

This time should have been occupied in the effort to extricate the Vendetta from the quagmire.

For along the ridge of land a large body of the M'bokis could be seen advancing to the attack.

They evidently meant to make an attack on the Vendetta.

"They are going to make an attack upon us!" cried Van Dyke, with apprehension.

"Let them come," said Frank Reade, grimly; "they may be sorry for it!"

But Van Dyke looked dubious.

"I am afraid, Mr. Reade," he said, "that you do not look at this matter serious enough!"

"Why should I?" asked Frank.

"There are a good many reasons. The M'bokis are hard fighters. I see nothing to hinder them from overpowering us, now that you have not the use of the electric gun!"

"Wait and see!" said Frank, coolly.

"I think I will return to my party," said McFadden.

"All right, sir," agreed Frank; "after the battle we will talk with you about your colonization scheme."

"Thank you!"

Then McFadden started to return to his party.

The M'bokis were drawing nearer very rapidly.

There was no time to lose.

Several of the arrows flew over the Vendetta, and there was danger now in remaining outside.

Frank Reade, Jr., knew this well, and cried, authoritatively:

"Come, let us all get under cover!"

This command was heeded.

Barney had now recovered from his bee sting, and with a repeating rifle was with the others at the loopholes.

As the M'bokis advanced they received a hot fire from the Winchesters.

This had the effect of holding them for a brief time in check.

But only for a brief while.

They soon gained courage, and came on with more daring and recklessness than ever.

It did not take long for the defenders of the Vendetta to see that the battle was certain to come to close quarters.

The result of this only time could tell.

Van Dyke was in a state of great worriment.

But Frank Reade, Jr., thus far had displayed no anxiety whatever.

"Do you not fear a close encounter?" asked Van Dyke, anxiously, as he turned from the loophole at which he stood.

"Well, of course, there is more or less risk in it!" said Frank, coolly, "but I believe that we can take care of the wretches, all right enough."

"But how will you do it? If they reach the rail of the Vendetta, I don't see what is to hinder them from coming aboard."

"Don't you?"

"No."

"Well, come with me and I will very quickly show you."

Frank led the way into the pilot-house. He put his hand upon one of the levers of the keyboard and said:

"When I built the Vendetta I had this very exigency in view. Now, this lever is connected with a wire, which in turn is connected with the dynamo and the metal railing of the Vendetta. It is possible for me, by pressing this lever, to throw such a powerful current into the railing that no number of men could climb over it. You shall see."

To say that Van Dyke was amazed, would be a simple statement of the truth.

The M'bokis were coming full tilt, and it looked plainly as if Frank Reade, Jr., would have an opportunity to test the force of his theory.

CHAPTER V.

THE REPULSE.

Van Dyke made no comment whatever upon Frank's startling declaration.

The M'bokis were coming with all speed, but the young inventor did not attempt to use his rifle.

What could it avail?

Perhaps half a dozen of the foe might be picked off by him, but that would not check the others.

So he watched with breathless fascination the approach of the foe.

Frank held the lever under his finger.

Van Dyke was fearfully excited.

His face was as white as chalk.

"Haven't you waited long enough, Frank?" he asked anxiously. "I don't believe it is safe to let them come so close."

"Hold your horses," said the young inventor, coolly.

"I hope you know what you are doing?"

"I do."

Just at that moment the natives reached the Vendetta rail.

Hideous-looking wretches they were in their war panoply, and they looked like veritable fiends swarming over the rail.

Van Dyke walked up and down in an agony of apprehension.

"My God!" he exclaimed, in horror. "Are you not waiting too long, Frank? See, they are aboard of us!"

"Don't get excited!" said Frank, in his coolest fashion.

Then he turned on the current.

The result was thrilling.

Through every part of the steel railing, and even into the shell itself, went the powerful current.

"Keep on the floor!" cried Frank, warningly, to the others. "Keep on the wood, or you may get a shock, too."

It is needless to say that the injunction was obeyed.

As for the M'bokis, it was the greatest surprise party they had ever experienced.

Confident of victory, they had boarded the machine.

But those swarming like bees at the rail suddenly were thrown about in the wildest confusion.

It was as if a giant hand had picked them up and hurled them back.

In some cases either insensibility or a daze was caused, and the interlopers were hurled back like puppets.

As well might they have attempted a wrestling match with a Jove.

In every sense of the word they were "not in it." Backward rolled the line of natives as if at the mouth of a destructive battery.

Lightning-like flashes played along the rail.

Right and left went the powerful electric fluid.

The terror and superstition of the savage nature was thoroughly aroused.

It was impossible for them to stand before such a fearful, unseen and mysterious power.

All the while those on board the Vendetta were pouring destructive fire into their midst.

The M'bokis were driven back and retreated to a safe distance.

Their defeat was to them a most inexplicable thing.

As for Van Dyke, he was beside himself with amazement and joy.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" he cried, exuberantly. "I never saw anything to beat that in my life."

"They will do well if they take the Vendetta with the weapons they have!" declared Frank, with a smile.

"Well, I should say so. Why, mercy on us, nobody could stand such a repulse as that. But yet I would not be surprised to see them come to a second attack."

"Do you believe it?"

"I do."

"They are fools, then."

"Perhaps so; but they cannot be accused of cowardice."

"You are right."

The M'bokis certainly seemed about to essay another attack.

A cloud of arrows came rattling down upon the steel hull of the Vendetta.

Then once more the long line of black forms came to the attack.

This time they came from all sides, and with the resistless force of the whirlwind.

It was evident that they meant to carry the assault this time.

But Frank Reade, Jr., only smiled.

He had no fear of the result.

On came the foe.

Once more they struck the rail of the Vendetta. The machine trembled with the shock.

But the powerful electric fluid was too much for the attacking party. Backward they were hurled again as if in the grip of a giant.

This time they were compelled to retreat in wild disorder and did not return to the attack.

It was a complete victory for the Vendetta.

More than this, it effectually put an end to the battle for that day.

The M'bokis retired beyond the rise of land and did not make any further hostile demonstration.

The colonists were jubilant, and now came rushing up the slope to meet the Vendetta's party and exchange compliments.

Fourteen stout-hearted Hibernians they were, with perhaps half a hundred of the Mambouli tribe as bodyguard.

General introductions followed. Barney was right in his element.

The Celt now became enthusiastic over the colonization scheme, and declared himself in favor of it, heart and hand.

"Bejabers, av it wasn't fer lavin' Misther Frank here, I'd cum out an' jine yez—on me worrud I would!" he cried.

"Jist be afther spakin' a good worrud to all av yure frinds in Ameriky," said Jerry O'Brien.

"Mr. O'Shea will do that," said McFadden, confidently.

"Begorra, yez kin bet yure loife I will!" declared Barney.

Night was fast settling down, and it was determined to camp on the spot.

It was proposed the next day to resume the journey together, as the promised land of the colonists was near the head village of the Mambouli nation.

The colonists were all highly in favor of Frank's championing of the Mamboulis.

"Begorra, none av ther slave thraders will foind wilcome in New Oireland," averred Felix Rourke. "Shure, it's slavery enuff ivery son of Oireland has seen."

But one grand thing was accomplished before camp was made for the night.

A stout cable was brought from the colonists' camp and attached to the axle of the Vendetta.

Then all the gang laid hold of the cable. Such a tremendous force proved most efficient and the Vendetta was dragged, unharmed but somewhat soiled, out of the mire.

This was a matter of general congratulation.

Barney and Pomp soon had all traces of the mud removed and the Vendetta was quickly as bright and shining as ever.

Camp was made upon the spot.

But Van Dyke was fearful of a night attack from the foe.

"I'll soon guard against that!" said Frank. "But none of you must venture away from the camp."

The young inventor produced a powerful coil of wire.

This he proceeded to stretch around the entire camp at a radius of two hundred feet or more.

Stakes driven in the ground supported it about knee high.

"They cannot cross the wire in the darkness!" declared

Frank, confidently. "If they think they can, let them try it."

"Begorra, it will be a costly job for the spalpeens, I'm after thinkin'," declared Barney, confidently.

All in the camp were warned not to touch the wire.

Then the party proceeded to make themselves comfortable.

The Irish colonists seemed delighted at having fallen in with the Vendetta and its crew.

Frank delighted them still further by promising to remain with them until their colony was fairly started.

"Before I leave this region," he declared, "I mean that the slave traders and their allies, the M'bokis, shall be wiped out of existence!"

"God bless ye fer a gintleman!" cried Jerry O'Brien. "Shure, it's long life I wish fer ye!"

Barney was unusually hilarious.

The Celt was right in his element with so many of his countrymen with him.

He could not control his exuberant feelings nor his voluble tongue at the same time.

Pomp also seemed to enjoy the best of spirits upon this the soil of his forefathers.

It was but natural that they should celebrate the victory of the day.

So the whole party congregated around the camp fires.

The Mambouli natives were grouped in a semi-circle upon one side, with their long lances athwart their knees and their skin mantles fantastically draped about their shoulders.

The colonists and the Vendetta's party sat opposite.

Smoking and story telling was indulged in for some while.

Then a space was cleared and the Mamboulis introduced a number of weird and most grotesque dances.

Then Van Dyke said:

"Barney and Pomp, can't you contribute a little to the sport?"

The invitation was accepted.

Barney brought out his fiddle and Pomp his banjo.

As Pomp struck up a rollicking tune all the negroes listened in wonder and admiration.

They grouped about their countryman and manifested their appreciation in a most demonstrative way.

In fact, Pomp suddenly found himself a very popular man.

The Mamboulis seemed disposed to lay claim to him as the most talented of their color.

But Pomp was not disposed to relish such treatment, however kindly meant, and objected forcibly.

He ceased playing and singing, and Barney's turn began.

The Celt was in a happy humor, and at once struck up an Irish christening song.

This was enough for the colonists.

Up jumped every Irishman, and into a mad Irish reel they plunged.

Barney played the fiddle with all his strength and talent and the colonists danced until they seemed likely to drop.

The negro natives applauded, and watched the circle with keen enjoyment.

As for Frank Reade, Jr., and Van Dyke words could not express their amusement.

They were applauding spectators just as long as the dance went on.

It was likely that more than half the night would have been spent this way had it not been for a sudden startling incident, which put a sudden stop to the proceedings and brought every man to his feet in alarm and apprehension.

CHAPTER VI.

ONCE MORE EN ROUTE.

It was a sudden, thrilling shriek which went down through the darkness of the night, which caused every man to spring to his feet in alarm.

It was a fearful wail of agony, and caused all a shiver.

It came from the darkness beyond the camp.

For full half a minute it seemed to linger in the air.

Then Van Dyke gasped:

"Heavens! What was that?"

"Bejabers, it's the banshee!" cried O'Brien, who had taken a stiff dram of whiskey and was a bit unsteady.

"Divil a bit!" cried Barney. "It's the inimy!"

"That is right!" declared Frank. "To arms, every body!"

"The enemy!" exclaimed Van Dyke. "You don't mean the M'bokis?"

"Yes, I do!"

"But—the electric wire!"

"That is one of them who ran into it in the darkness!"

"By Jove, that is so!"

"Listen!"

There was a medley of startling and curious sounds that came from a point just above the camp.

There was no doubt but that the rascally M'bokis had planned a night attack upon the camp.

But the electric wire had frustrated this.

But at this moment a flight of arrows came down into the camp.

Several of the Mamboulis were badly injured. Fortunately none of the white men were injured.

Frank Reade, Jr., instantly sprang aboard the Vendetta. He ran to the searchlight and turned the current on.

The powerful light was flashed up the slope, and there, if in broad daylight, a startling scene was revealed.

There grouped in the vicinity of the electric wire were all half a thousand of the bloodthirsty M'bokis.

Not one in the colonists' camp but could plainly see the whole gang.

There was no doubt but that it would have been quite a serious matter for the colonists if the wretches could have got in beyond the electric wire.

Frank was determined to give the M'bokis a lesson which they would not soon forget.

He saw that they were trying to break down the deadly barrier by hurling bowlders upon it.

That they would succeed in this was certain.

Once the line was crossed and they could descend upon the camp in the darkness, much harm might be done.

Frank switched the Vendetta about until it headed up the slope.

Then with the gun pointed up the hillside he drew a thick line upon the horde of M'bokis.

They were hurling javelins and arrows down into the camp and making fierce manifestations.

It was but a moment's work for Frank to train the gun and throw into the breach a dynamite projectile.

Then he pressed the spring which filled the pneumatic chamber.

Van Dyke stood at his shoulder.

"You are going to give them one, Frank?" he asked.

"Yes."

Then Frank pressed the electric key.

There was a hissing of air, a slight recoil, a concussion, and then in the same instant the heavens almost to the horizon seemed aglow with a lightning flash.

There was a thunderous roar, and the spot where the M'bokis were grouped seemed one mighty wall of flame.

Only for an instant.

Then clouds of smoke rolled up. Beneath the searchlight's glare a thrilling scene was revealed.

The spot where the savage natives had been was a huge mound of earth and debris.

Beyond it the survivors of the terrible lightning stroke were seen running for their lives.

Frank hastily threw another projectile into the breach.

This one was thrown beyond the other, and caught a number of the M'bokis in its death grip.

Fully one hundred of the savage natives must have met death in that awful cyclone of ruin and death.

The rest fled for their lives before that mysterious destroyer, the like of which they had never before heard of, nor could not understand.

It was a wonderful and impressive scene, and those who witnessed it never forgot it.

The Irish colonists were deeply impressed, and the Mambouli natives as well.

The battle was now ended in good earnest.

It was not likely that the M'bokis would venture to again attack the Vendetta in a hurry.

Nothing more of them was seen that night.

Evidently they had regarded it as utterly useless to attempt to vanquish the machine.

When morning came the coast was clear.

They had made good their retreat, and nothing was to be seen of them anywhere.

The spirits of all were high when daylight came.

Everybody was astir at an early hour, and preparations were made for the start.

The colonists felt much encouraged, now that the Vendetta was enlisted in their behalf.

They believed they had little more to fear from the M'bokis.

So the start was at once made for the Mambouli country.

There was a wonderfully rich and fertile valley in the heart of the African mountains which the colonists had settled upon as their future home.

Through it flowed a beautiful and wide river, and which was tributary to the Congo.

This was navigable to the sea for large vessels, and the back country was rich in minerals and ivory.

"There is the territory," said McFadden, "three times as large as your State of New York. It is well fitted to make a new Ireland."

"Indeed!" said Frank.

"The Mambouli river is deep and wide, and in the valley merges into a large basin which the navies of the world could float."

"That is fine!"

"Upon this basin we shall make our city of New Dublin. For a time we shall depend upon the trade in ivory and other products of the wild state. We shall develop agricultural pursuits later."

"You are outlining a grand scheme. I can only hope that you will make it a success."

"I am sure that we will. As soon as we send envoys

abroad, I think we can draw half of Ireland here inside a year."

"That will be quick development."

"You are right. Oh, the Irish people are wide awake and progressive, and will be sure to build up a nation of which England shall some day stand in fear."

"I hope you will succeed."

"You will help us to fight our foes at the start?"

"Certainly I will!"

"I am glad to hear you say that. Depend upon it, we shall never cease to bless you. Your name shall be placed high in the history of New Ireland!"

McFadden was a hopeless enthusiast over the colonization scheme.

Nothing would blast his faith in it.

He was confident that all the Irishmen on the globe would flock to the new Utopia.

Half of the day the party went forward at a moderate rate of speed.

The oxen used by the colonist to transport their goods were a trifle slow.

But at noon they camped upon the banks of a small stream and Frank computed that they were fifty miles from the coast.

They had yet one hundred miles to go.

The valley was about fifty miles from the heart of the Mambouli country.

In two days more of travel they should make it easily.

Camp was made at high noon, and a couple of hours were spent in resting and eating.

Then the party once more went on.

They now came to a wide plateau full fifteen miles wide and twenty-five long, and as level as a floor.

The Vendetta could have bowled across it very quickly, but the oxen would no doubt consume hours in its passage.

But at this stage of the journey a thrilling incident occurred.

Suddenly, as they were passing a clump of palms, which, gathered among some rocks, made a grotto, two huge lions sprang out into full view.

They gave terrific roars and fairly made the ground tremble.

There was a scattering of the terrified Momboulis.

They knew the lion as a much-dreaded and greatly-to-be avoided foe.

But a Mambouli boy seemed to become separated from the others.

In a moment one of the lions pounced upon him.

The monster's fangs crushed into the flesh of one of arms.

Shrieks of terror escaped the natives.

"My God! Do you see that?" cried Van Dyke to Frank. They were in the pilot-house of the Vendetta.

"I should say so!" exclaimed the young inventor with horror. "What on earth shall we do?"

"Bejabers, give the baste a shot!" cried Barney.

"No, no!" cried Van Dyke, "that won't do. You'll hurt the boy!"

This was true.

But one of the Mamboulis had flung his javelin.

It struck the lion in the shoulder and gave it a sting wound. The effect was not altogether encouraging.

The big, yellow brute let out a deafening roar.

With its fangs yet fastened in his arm, it flung the boy over its tawny shoulder and started away across the plateau on the run.

Van Dyke was beside himself.

"My soul, Frank!" he cried. "We ought to save the boy!"

"And we will!" gritted Frank.

The other lion was racing beside his companion. The two brutes seemed to be making for the jungle beyond the plateau.

It was some miles distant.

Should they reach it with their prey they would doubtless make a meal of him without delay.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LION CHASE.

Frank Reade, Jr., realized this full well. The young inventor viewed the awful possibility with horror.

He could not bear to think of a human being suffering such a fate.

"That boy is lost!" said Van Dyke.

"No," said Frank, sternly. "I will save him!"

The young inventor pressed the electric key and the Vendetta leaped forward like a thing of life.

On went the machine with lightning speed.

Then ensued a wonderful and a brilliant race.

The lions of course knew that the Vendetta was after them.

The one with the boy upon his shoulder dashed on.

His mate turned with angry lashing of tail to face and defy the pursuer.

The brute evidently had no idea that the Vendetta was a superior antagonist.

He stood in the path of the machine, the picture of
 eral fury.

"Why," cried Van Dyke, with amazement, "he means to
 ow fight!"

"It will be a sorry day for him if he does!" declared
 ank.

The lion, however, stood boldly in the path of the Ven-
 ita.

He made a savage picture indeed as he stood there furi-
 sly lashing his tail. He gave a roar which made the
 pound tremble.

Down swooped the Vendetta.

Then there was a collision.

The lion attempted to grapple with the machine, but
 e Vendetta literally doubled and chewed the lion into
 ince-meat.

The deadly knives on the axles got in their work.

The result was that the erring king of beasts was dis-
 tributed in quarters and sections broadcast over the plain.

Whether the other lion had seen the fate of its mate or
 it was not known.

However this was, it suddenly manifested fear.

While it did not relinquish its hold upon the Mambouli
 y it increased its speed.

It made a desperate effort to reach the jungle.

If it should succeed in this those on board the Vendetta
 ew that all would be up with the boy.

But Frank hoped to intercept the beast.

The Vendetta gained rapidly.

It was now almost upon the lion.

But a problem now arose.

How could the lion be killed without injuring the boy?

If the lion was run over and cut to pieces so would the
 y be, too.

But Frank Reade, Jr., was not long baffled.

He was fertile in expedients and presently hit upon one.

Barney was an expert with the lariat.

The Celt had served a term as cowboy and was well up
 the art.

Among his effects there was always included a stout lariat.

Frank called to him:

"Barney!"

"Ay, sor!"

"Just get your lariat. Go out on the pilot and see if
 ou can't catch that lion's hind leg."

"Whurroo!" cried Barney, readily. "Yez kin jes' bet I
 in!"

The Celt, with alacrity, hastened to obey the order.

The Vendetta was now close upon the lion.

The jungle was barely a quarter of a mile away.

No time was to be lost.

The Celt braced himself and whirled the lariat aloft.

Away it went, circling through the air like a whiplash.
 Its sinuous coils snake-like flashed under the lion.

Then Barney gave a yell of disgust.

He had failed.

But the lariat was in his hands again in a twinkling.

Once more he balanced himself.

Swish!

Away went the line.

This time it caught the lion's leg. Quick as a flash the
 loop was taut, and Barney braced the line around a standard
 of the railing.

The beast was thrown in a heap, rolling end over end.

For a moment those on board the Vendetta felt a thrill
 of dismay, for the lariat had snapped.

But the lion had relaxed its hold upon the boy, and he
 was lying in the dust.

Frank swerved the Vendetta just in time to allow the
 wheels to escape the boy's body.

And then before the lion could get upon its feet the
 Vendetta was upon it.

When the wheels of the machine had done with that lion
 he was good for very little.

Cut all into pieces, his career as a man-eater was at an
 end.

A cheer went up from the crew of the Vendetta.

All were highly elated.

Frank turned the machine about.

The boy was just scrambling to his feet.

The Vendetta was stopped, and in a moment the boy
 was brought aboard.

He was pale and faint, and had lost much blood.

But upon examination it was found that his arm was
 lacerated, but no bones were broken.

This was joyful news.

He was indeed a thankful lad for his wonderful rescue.

The remainder of the party now came up.

The Mamboulis were very grateful to Frank Reade, Jr.,
 for the act. They were his friends from that moment.

All that day and the next the party kept on.

Plains were traversed, jungles were threaded, streams
 forded, and finally upon the morning of the third day the
 Promised Land burst into view.

And if ever any in the party gazed upon a land of prom-
 ise they did at that moment.

It far exceeded their most sanguine expectations.

Wide and deep between mighty mountain ranges was the valley.

It seemed at certain points fully one hundred miles broad.

How far its length extended it was not easy to say.

There lay the smoothly flowing tributary to the Congo.

Certainly the fertile green slopes, the intervalles and meadows gave promise of rich fruition.

The colonists were spellbound.

"Bejabers, an' I'd think I was in the Loughrea!" declared O'Brien. "Only fer that, it's grander. Shure, an' it's the same green to a cint as ye'll foind in ould Oireland!"

"But niver a shamrock!" said Rourke.

"Begorra, we'll transplant some!"

Everybody laughed at this.

The spirits of the Hibernians were high. It seemed as if the Mecca of their hopes had been reached.

Down into the valley the party made its way.

They had the day before them, and it was intended to waste no time.

In due course the banks of the river were reached.

The country certainly presented a rich and wonderfully inviting aspect.

The river was wide and smooth flowing.

The ground was carpeted with the richest of green verdure.

The soil was dark and arable, the climate warm and balmy, the scenery beyond all description.

Upon the high slopes there grazed the mountain deer and goats.

Lower down were the antelopes and buffalo.

Birds of beautiful plumage sang in the forests, and all was joy and life and animation and balmy atmosphere.

Surely the human mind could long for nothing more divine.

The Irishmen were in the height of bliss.

A spot was selected for the foundations of their city.

This was upon a neck of land which jutted out into the basin here formed by the river.

The avenues were staked out, and work was at once begun upon a number of stone houses.

As soon as these were finished and they were made habitable, the Hibernians intended to send to the coast for their families.

The Mamboulis were much interested in all that was going on and worked hard for the colonists.

They built themselves huts of palm leaves upon the shore near and made themselves useful in various ways.

Before ten days had passed quite a little town had sprung up.

As soon as the foundations were well laid the question of suitable defense was considered.

It was almost a certainty that they would for some while be in danger of an attack.

The M'bokis would never allow them to remain in peaceful possession of the valley.

There was no doubt of this.

So it was decided to prepare for defense.

The neck of land was marked off and the line of a high wall was laid.

This was to be partly of earth, partly of stone and topped with palisades.

The Mamboulis helped valiantly in the construction of the wall.

As yet no sign of the M'bokis had been seen.

Nor had the slave traders obtruded their presence.

However, there was no doubt but that these would come in due time. Perils would not fail to show up.

"Well, Mr. Reade," said McFadden one day, as he led Frank down to the river bank, "what do you think now of our colonization scheme?"

"I think it is grand," said Frank. "The Dutch and the Portuguese, as well as the English and French, have found holds in Africa. There is no reason why Ireland should not."

"I should live to regret this work if it should become the property of England."

"I think that cannot be."

"It is very strange that the United States does not attempt to gain a foothold in the Dark Continent."

"Ah, you forget. The American people have yet millions of acres of unexplored and unsettled lands in their own mighty country, which is quite enough for their needs."

"If I were sure that I am laying the foundation of another republic like America in this country, I think I should be the happiest man on earth!" declared McFadden.

"That you will never live long enough to know."

"I suppose not."

"I doubt if Washington in achieving independence for the United States really dreamed of the mighty results to be achieved."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SLAVE HUNTER.

"Then the builder of a nation can only live in a vague hope that the fruits of his labors will live!" said the Irish colonist.

"That seems true!" replied Frank Reade, Jr.

"Even if I partly realize my dream before death I think I may be happy."

"I hope so."

"But these slave hunters. You think they will give us trouble?"

"I am sure of it."

"Why should they?"

"Easy enough. The founding of such a colony in this region will injure the slave trade, and eventually stop it."

"Well, that is right."

"Of course it is."

"But what shall we do about it?"

"Make the best of it."

"Do you really think they will make war upon us?"

"I am sure of it."

McFadden looked anxious.

"I hope you will not leave us yet," he declared. "Somehow, with your electric guns I have no fear."

"Rest assured!" said Frank Reade, Jr., forcibly, "I shall not leave this region until the last spark of slavery has been stamped out."

"Good!" cried McFadden, joyfully. "You will get your reward."

The words had barely left his lips when there came an outcry from the village.

A runner was seen coming down the slope into the settlement.

He was a Mambouli, and he did not cease his rapid pace until he had thrown himself at McFadden's feet.

He was panting fiercely and was evidently greatly exhausted. For some moments he could not speak.

"Mercy on us!" cried the Irishman. "What is wrong now?"

When the Mambouli did regain his tongue not a word he said could be understood.

But McFadden quickly sent for an interpreter.

When he came the message was quickly rendered.

"He is from the main village of the Mamboulis, fifty miles up the valley!" said the interpreter. "He has come to look for the white king who went to get help from his people to fight the slave hunters."

"That is me!" cried Van Dyke, excitedly. "You are from King Metlatmo?"

This to the runner in the Mambouli tongue.

The fellow replied in the affirmative.

"What does your king want? Has anything gone wrong up there?"

The runner nodded his head.

Then in the Mambouli language he made quite a long speech.

Van Dyke listened intently.

When the fellow had finished Van Dyke turned to Frank and said:

"My word on it, Mr. Reade, we shall have hot work before us."

"Why?"

"Sol Hardinger and his gang have driven the Mamboulis from their village with great slaughter. They are now on their way here!"

Frank's eyes flashed.

He was angered.

"So the slave hunters are getting in their work?" he asked.

"They are!"

"Then it is criminal for us to stay here longer."

"But where will we go?"

"To their succor, of course!"

"Good! Let us be off at once! This fellow will show us the way. Come!"

No time was lost in making ready.

Everybody was excited when it was known what the object of the expedition would be.

The Mamboulis were particularly excited and anxious to go in the chase.

But Frank concluded that all were needed to defend New Dublin, as the colonial town was called.

So he took only his own party, save the negro runner, aboard the Vendetta.

Up the valley the Vendetta ran at clipping speed.

The valley opened wider as they went on.

It was full fifty miles to the Mambouli settlement.

But Frank expected to come across them before half that distance had been covered.

The Mamboulis were pursued hotly by the slave hunters and must every moment be drawing nearer.

Frank did not believe that the slave hunters knew of the presence of the Vendetta in the region.

It would be no doubt quite a surprise to them when they should see her and know the power of her guns.

"They don't care to make our acquaintance!" declared Van Dyke. "It will be an easy matter to terrorize them."

"Well, I hope so!" said Frank.

"Pshaw! they won't be in it!"

"We must, if not exterminate, at least give them a heart-breaking lesson."

"You are right!"

On went the Vendetta at a rapid rate. It did not take long for so swift a machine to run twenty miles.

About that distance had been covered when they came upon a vast jungle which seemed here to intersect the valley.

It was so dense that it did not seem possible for the Vendetta to penetrate it.

But now a startling sound burst upon the hearing of the Vendetta's party.

This was the distant sound of firearms.

The distant sound of yells and cries could also be heard.

It was evident that a battle of some kind was going on far beyond the jungle line.

"What shall we do?" asked Van Dyke, in dismay.

"We can't penetrate the jungle here!" declared Frank.

"That is true!"

"I see no way but to wait here until the party comes along."

"Can we do that?"

"I see no reason why we can't. The Mamboulis are probably being driven by the slave hunters."

"The dastardly wretches!" gritted Van Dyke. "If we gave them their just deserts we should blow them from the face of the earth!"

"I believe you."

There was no other or better way apparently than to simply wait for the foe to appear.

As fortune had it this was not a long spell.

The Mambouli runner was sent into the woods to see and warn King Metlatmo of the nearness of friends.

The result was that the native king called his men to a retreat and suddenly burst from the jungle and rushed up to the Vendetta.

His eyes were streaming with tears of joy, and his unmistakable pleasure was great as he embraced his friend, Van Dyke.

The latter could speak the Mambouli tongue well.

He talked with the king.

In this way he learned much about the state of affairs.

It seemed that Hardinger and his gang had made raid after raid upon the tribe until finally they had been entirely driven out of their village.

This was one of the greatest of hardships, and but for the coming of Van Dyke King Metlatmo would have been in despair indeed.

But now that the Vendetta was on the scene the Mamboulis felt confident of victory.

King Metlatmo was taken aboard the Vendetta and expressed himself as wonderstruck at its fine appointments.

The savage could not understand the arts by which the white man accomplished such wonders.

To his crude mind it was the aid of the supernatural that accomplished all these miracles, for such they seemed to him.

The Mamboulis all began to come in rapidly now.

A position was chosen upon the brow of a little hill.

Here the Mamboulis were held in mass.

Frank Reade, Jr., allowed the Vendetta to stand out in bold view.

Through the jungle came the victorious M'bokis, followed by a score of villainous-looking white men.

The M'bokis, with savage cries, had started up the slope to attack the Mamboulis.

But a volley from the rifles of the Vendetta's party for a moment held them in check.

Then the astonished white slave hunters came out of the jungle and beheld the Vendetta.

They gazed upon it for some time in wonderment.

What their comments were it was impossible to guess, but finally one of them advanced for a parley.

Frank was ready and willing to grant it.

The fellow who essayed this was a tall, sinister-visaged fellow.

When a dozen yards distant he halted, folded his arms and insolently leered at Frank.

"Well," said the young inventor, brusquely, "what do you want?"

The fellow's face turned black.

"Eh?" he snarled, in an uncivil fashion. "That's a poor question to ask me. Who the deuce are you?"

"Answer my question first," said Frank, coolly.

"Waal, I will. I want to see some one of ye an' ask ye a few questions."

"Go ahead!"

"Who the deuce are ye?"

"I am Frank Reade, Jr."

"Don't know ye nor never heard tell on ye. What kind of a carriage is that?"

"Can't you see?"

"Yas; but what's it for?"

"To travel safely through this miserable region."

"Oh, I see!"

The villain expectorated some tobacco juice and then went on:

"Waal, it's a likely looking team. But whar's yer oxen?"

"We don't use them."

"You don't?"

"No."

The fellow looked astounded.

"That's queer!" he muttered. "How do ye make the thing go, anyway?"

"By machinery, which is operated by electricity."

"Electricity? Never heerd much about thet. Is it like steam?"

"It is much more powerful."

"Sho! I reckon it's wonderful. But what are ye up to in this region? Traveling for pleasure?"

"By no means," replied Frank, sternly. "We are here to exterminate Sol Hardinger and his gang of slave hunters."

The truce bearer stood for a moment wholly unable to speak.

"Waal," he gasped, finally, "do ye really mean thet?"

"Yes, I do."

"An' what wud ye do to Sol if ye caught him?"

"I'd hang him to the nearest tree," declared Frank.

"Ye don't mean that!"

"Yes, I do!"

The fellow stood looking sullenly at the machine for a moment.

Then he said, with a sort of chuckle:

"Ain't afraid to speak yer mind, are ye? Waal, I might as well tell yo' fust as last that I'm Sol Hardinger. What are ye going to do about it?"

CHAPTER IX.

RESCUE OF THE SLAVES.

Never in his life was Frank Reade, Jr., so taken aback as at that moment.

The declaration of Hardinger was a startling one.

For a moment silence reigned between the two men.

Frank's inborn desire at that moment was to make a prisoner of the wretch.

But this was not permissible.

He was the bearer of a truce. The young inventor, however, finally managed to say:

"I'll tell you what I'm going to do about it, sir. If you are Sol Hardinger I am going to advise you this very moment to get into some other and more respectable business!"

The villain laughed.

"It's nothing to you what business I follow!" he declared. "You say you're goin' ter exterminate me, eh?"

"I can do it!"

"An' ther hull slave gang?"

"Yes!"

"What hev we ever done to you?"

"To me personally, nothing. But the whole Mambouli nation has suffered at your lecherous hands!"

"Humph! What's that to you?"

"It's a good deal!"

"Yer foolish! Them Mamboulis are only a pack of ignorant niggers, and only fit to be slaves, anyway."

"That is your look at it!"

"It's every sensible man's look!"

"Never!" cried Frank, forcibly. "The principle of slavery, at best, is based upon sin!"

"Waal, it's none of your business, anyway!" said the villain, testily. "Ye'll only meddle at your peril!"

"You will need to tremble, Sol Hardinger. Bitter punishment is at hand for you!"

The villain laughed scornfully.

"Spare yer foolish talk!" he declared. "Ye'll never meddle with ther slavers agin, not if I knows it."

With this the parley ended, and he strode away.

Hardinger went back into the jungle. Time passed by. A very curious state of affairs was now disclosed.

No sound came from the jungle, nor did any of the M'bokis put in an appearance.

All was quiet as the grave.

What did it mean?

Frank Reade, Jr., was puzzled.

Were the wretches lying low, or had they abandoned the attack and beat a retreat?

The young inventor was in a quandary as to how to act or what to do.

Van Dyke was equally as deeply puzzled. In this extremity the Mambouli king was called.

"Metlatmo," said Van Dyke, brusquely, "can you tell where the slave hunters are and what they are doing?"

The king of Mamboulis bowed in a confident manner.

"I will send out runners," he said, in his native tongue. "I will find out."

Frank could hardly believe that the slave hunters had really absconded.

Hardinger's threatening words would have led him to believe that they were going to make an attack on the Vendetta.

But this they certainly did not as yet seem inclined to do. However, the best that could be done was to wait.

An hour passed.

The Mambouli runners were all through the jungle.

They came back with a startling report.

This was that the slave hunters and the M'bokis had

withdrawn and were doubtless at that moment on their way to the coast.

"I can see it all!" declared Van Dyke, confidently. "You see, Frank, they have secured a good number of slaves and they intend to run them down to the coast, ship them, and then come back for more."

Frank drew a deep breath.

"Do you believe that?" he asked.

"I do."

"Well, there is just one thing to do."

"And that——"

"Is to intercept them and liberate the poor wretches whom they have in limbo."

"Good! You have the idea!"

Hastily arrangements were made to this end.

The intelligence brought in by the scouts was that the slave hunters had made a detour and were skirting the farther side of the valley on their way to the coast.

There seemed, therefore, no better way than to run down the valley as far as a certain point where it narrowed and there try to intercept them.

The only other way for the villains to escape was to scale the mountains, and Frank did not believe that they would do this.

Accordingly arrangements were made with this end in view.

The Vendetta could easily reach the lower valley first.

Frank was not in any sense particular about the aid of the Mamboulis.

He was confident that he could whip the slave hunters single-handed.

So he directed Metlatmo to follow on behind as rapidly as possible, while the Vendetta went ahead at a rapid speed.

Down the valley went the Vendetta at a tearing pace.

The point where the valley narrowed was six miles distant.

The slave hunters had secured quite a start, and Frank had good reason to fear that he might not succeed in cutting them off.

So he sent the Vendetta ahead at top speed.

Mile after mile sped by.

Now they momentarily drew nearer to the point where the mountain walls began to converge.

As yet nothing had been seen of the slave hunters.

But now Van Dyke suddenly pointed up the mountain slope and cried:

"Look, Frank; there they are!"

"Begorra, that's thrue!" cried Barney.

All on the Vendetta's deck looked up the mountain side.

Along a path which led over a precipice there was seen the train of the slave hunters.

Several hundred M'bokis were marching in single file.

In advance were the white traders, and followed by an armed guard were the unfortunate slaves themselves.

They were bound together with thongs and hemmed with an armed guard so that escape was impossible.

There were men, and women, and the unfortunate creatures suffered much from the cruel whips which their captors carried, and which were used upon them to compel them to keep up.

Frank scanned the party closely with a glass.

He saw that the path trended downward and that they must soon reach the lower ground where it would be easy to overtake them.

That the slave traders had seen the Vendetta and understood its purpose to cut them off Frank felt sure.

But the young inventor noted that the slave traders did not seem disposed to turn back or to avoid the meeting.

"I will give them a lesson this time!" he chuckled.

He caused the Vendetta to go ahead more slowly now and he watched the slave traders closely.

Just at the point where they must descend to the plain Frank saw a good patch of jungle.

Into this he ran the Vendetta and there awaited in ambush the coming of his intended prey.

"I will give them a lesson!" he muttered; "they will not soon forget the Vendetta!"

Time passed slowly.

To make sure that the foe would not outwit him, Frank had Pomp climb a tall palm near by.

The darky thus kept watch of the slave traders. He reported that they were momentarily drawing nearer.

Soon the sounds of their approach became quite plain.

The cracking of the slave whips, the curses of the drivers, and the groans of the victims could be plainly heard.

Van Dyke groaned with horror.

"Of all the nefarious trades on the face of the earth this is the most inhuman!" he declared.

"Indeed you are right!" declared Frank Reade, Jr.; "but we will soon put a stop to it."

"I hope so."

The young inventor was in earnest.

All the motives of a good sort in his generous nature were aroused.

He knew that the slave traffic was a blight upon Africa and the world itself even, and he was determined to check it.

Every moment now the party drew nearer.

was not likely that they suspected the presence of the vendetta in the palm clump.

Now the line of slaves came in sight. It was a miserable spectacle.

The wretched beings, chained heavily to each other, were staggering along in the path down the mountain.

The M'bokis guards walked upon either side, grim and eager.

Any attempt at escape would have been most disastrous to the poor wretches.

They were hopeless captives, and the fate seemingly in store for them was a most terrible one.

Frank Reade, Jr., and Van Dyke gazed upon the scene with a breathless interest.

The young inventor quickly decided on what he considered the best and safest move to make.

"What will we do about it, Frank?" asked Van Dyke, with something of impatience as the slaves filed by.

"Wait a moment," said the young inventor, coolly; "there is plenty of time."

The first file had passed.

Now came the main body of the M'bokis and the white traders.

But yet Frank did not act. Van Dyke was impatient.

"Wait," said the young inventor, coolly; "there is plenty of time."

The party thus filed by and down upon the plain.

Then the young inventor, who up to this time had been passive, sprang into the pilot-house.

The slave gang were now upon the open plain.

Frank's plan was now quickly seen and understood by Van Dyke.

Quick as a flash the young inventor pressed the lever which set the electrical machinery in motion.

The Vendetta burst from the palm clump and went thundering down upon the plain.

The slave gang saw it coming, and instantly formed in solid body.

A volley was fired by the white traders, and the M'bokis charged their arrows at the Vendetta.

"But of course that did no harm, nor did not retard its progress."

CHAPTER X.

STARTLING NEWS.

Down the slope went the Vendetta at a terrific rate of speed.

Nothing human could have stayed its course.

Down like a thunderbolt it went.

The M'bokis stood up before it, but in doing so they made a fatal mistake.

The machine plowed its way through them like a knife through cheese.

They were not in any way able to stand the fearful weight of iron descending upon them so heavily.

Dozens of the natives were crushed beneath those wheels and literally cut to pieces by the awful knives.

Frank Reade, Jr., could have used the electric gun and have exterminated the whole gang of them.

But he was fearful of doing injury to the Mambouli slaves.

His simple purpose was to rescue them by cutting them off from their captors.

Down through the line of M'bokis went the Vendetta.

Frank tried hard to reach the white traders.

If he could have done so he would gladly have crushed them also.

But Hardinger and his gang foresaw their peril and made good their escape again up the mountain slope.

The Vendetta turned its course of death and went back to strike the line of M'bokis again.

But the natives evidently saw their uselessness in resisting such a powerful antagonist and scattered.

Over the plain they fled in wild scattering. The Vendetta could easily have run down hundreds of them.

But Frank saw across the plains the Mamboulis coming.

He therefore decided to leave the routed foe to the tender mercies of King Metlatmo and his men.

The group of several hundred slaves were crouching in their chains, fearful that death was upon them.

But when they found that the Vendetta carried warm friends, their joy was far beyond description.

Frank Reade, Jr., and Van Dyke alighted and began to liberate the poor wretches.

They understood that the white men had come to their rescue, and they flung themselves gratefully at their feet.

But Frank made them rise up, saying, through Van Dyke: "You are free men. You shall be defended against the slave traders, and shall go back safely to your people."

Words cannot express the joy of the poor slaves.

King Metlatmo and his companions came up, having driven the M'bokis before them.

The Mambouli monarch embraced Frank in his great joy.

"He says that his people will not forget you," said Van Dyke, as interpreter.

"The trouble is not over yet," said Frank, apprehensively.

"Hardinger and his gang will not give up so easily. They will hatch up some new scheme, depend upon it."

"What do you think their game is?" asked Van Dyke, anxiously.

"I have no idea."

"What shall we do?"

"I think the best and safest thing to do is to band together down there by the basin with the colonists."

"Then you would not advise the Mamboulis to return to their village?"

"Not at present."

Van Dyke told the king of this. He at once replied:

"The good white man is our friend. We shall stay with him. We cannot go back to our village, for the huts are all burned. We will stay with the white men and build huts with them!"

"That is the best way!" declared Frank, after Van Dyke had interpreted this.

So it was settled.

Metlatmo now called his people together in a body.

There were nearly two thousand of them, men, women and children.

He informed them of the new plans.

They could not demur at the commands of their chief.

At once the start was made for the colony.

Nothing was now to be seen of the slave gang or of the M'bokis.

They had evidently retired to the mountains, where they were in hiding.

But that the great danger was yet to be apprehended from them was certain.

The twenty miles to the colony was covered before night-fall.

The Vendetta proceeded slowly, keeping pace with the Mamboulis for fear of an attack from the M'bokis.

Once in passing close to the mountain wall a flight of arrows came down from above.

Several of the Mamboulis were hurt.

This was evidence that the foe were yet upon the watch and that vigilance could not be relaxed.

Frank was angry, and turning the electric gun upon the spot from whence the volley had come sent a projectile up there.

It exploded with terrific effect among the rocks.

Loud yells and shrieks of pain and rage were heard.

But the M'bokis did not again trouble the party.

In time they came in sight of the Irish colony.

The Mamboulis were astonished at sight of the trim little town which had sprung up in the valley.

When told that the colonists had made settlement for good all seemed very much pleased.

They were extremely friendly toward the white men, seemed altogether a most intelligent class of people.

Frank Reade, Jr., as well as Van Dyke was deeply interested in them.

"Upon my word," declared the young inventor, "I see no reason why they should not be educated and brought to the highest state of civilization."

"They will equal our people, to give them advantage," declared Van Dyke.

"They certainly are the best class of natives in Africa."

"That is true."

"If the colonists are wise they will take them up and civilize them."

McFadden, when consulted upon this subject, declared

"We shall certainly do all that, Mr. Reade. The Mamboulis are too valuable as friends."

"Then you will certainly lay the foundation for one of the finest countries in the world."

"I hope to do so."

Matters went on smoothly at New Dublin for some days.

Then one day there occurred that which gave the colonists the wildest of joy.

A courier had been sent to the coast with the message that the colony was founded.

Awaiting this information in one of the small harbors on the coast was a sailing vessel, with the families of the colonists and others on board.

This vessel had beat its way slowly up the river.

It now appeared in the basin. The joy of the colonists was unbounded.

The vessel came to anchor in the basin, and those on board beheld the fertile valley and noble hills which form a part of the New Erin.

Boats were quickly lowered and the crew and passengers came ashore.

Mothers, wives, sweethearts and children all were landed at the primitive wharf in New Dublin.

It was a joyous meeting.

The impulsive Irish people were fairly wild with enthusiasm and joy. A general jubilee was indulged in.

As comfortable places as possible were provided for the tender ones, women and children.

The ship was loaded with wonderful stores of furniture and clothing, hardware and tools to till the soil with, all of those things most needed in the starting of a new colony.

These were brought ashore.

for a week this sort of thing went on. Acres of land measured out, claims made, foundations for new houses laid, and as if by magic the new colony grew. Back to Ireland the ship was to go for new emigrants. From the start the new colonization scheme seemed an assured success.

One of the most delighted persons in the colony was Frank Reade, Jr.

Had it not been for his extreme devotion to Frank Reade, the impulsive Celt would have cast his fortunes with the happy colonists.

But he could not think of leaving his famous young partner.

Frank Reade, Jr., and Van Dyke also interested themselves in the behalf of the Mamboulis.

A desirable spot was selected for them upon the opposite side of the basin.

Other lands were marked out for them.

They were quite able agriculturists in their way, and glad to learn more from their white instructors.

They learned rapidly, and many were the plans outlined for their welfare, such as the establishing of schools and the learning of all the arts of peace.

Indeed, not for many years had Frank Reade, Jr., been so deeply interested in a project.

There was no doubt but that the Irish colonists and the Mamboulis were bound to affiliate in the best of fashion.

Glorious indeed looked the future of New Erin.

It was decided that the sailing vessel should at once return to Ireland for new colonists.

Wharves were projected, and it was predicted that in a few years the basin would be filled with ships from all parts of the world.

But over all this bright bustle and animation and glorious outlook there hung a dark cloud.

The danger impending was hardly appreciated by the colonists.

It, in fact, was of a nature to seriously threaten the life of the colony.

Frank Reade, Jr., was the first to learn of it.

Van Dyke brought a Mambouli scout in one day who gathered thrilling information from the coast.

Along the coast at this juncture there were many Algerian galleys or slave ships.

The crews manning these were no better than pirates.

The report of the founding of a civilized colony had been circulated widely by Hardinger's gang.

The thousands of slave traders up and down the coast

realized full well that this meant a death blow to their nefarious trade.

The result was that a concerted movement was organized to attack and destroy the new colony.

The slave traders were to come up the river with a fleet of dhows, armed with cannon, and hundreds of piratical Algerians.

This Frank learned in its entirety from the Mambouli courier.

The young inventor saw at once that destruction threatened the new colony.

CHAPTER XI.

PREPARING FOR BATTLE.

None realized so well as Frank Reade, Jr., how very weak and defenseless the new colony was.

Scarcely supplied with weapons, and with not an earth-work or a rifle pit for defense, their ability to resist the hundreds of piratical slavers was slight.

It looked as if New Erin was to be nipped cruelly in the bud.

And this by the accursed slave traffic which was blighting the country.

Frank Reade, Jr., realized the mighty danger fully.

What was to be done?

The young inventor indulged in some deep thought.

He knew that it would never do to alarm the colonists.

To make a widespread stir or to circulate any terrible reports would prove most depressing and disastrous.

Something must be done, however, and at once.

But how were the pirates to be met and dealt with?

There were no warships or troops of any European power at hand to call upon for protection.

It looked as if the colony must either be abandoned or a fight made for it.

If the latter, the chances were decidedly slight for success.

"Well, Nick," said Frank to Van Dyke, "what shall we do?"

"Heaven knows," groaned the young philanthropist. "It is a pity to have this colony broken up in this way."

"I agree to that."

"I hope that some time America if not Europe will see the evil of this accursed slave traffic and wipe Algiers and its cut-throats from the face of the earth!"

"But that does not help our case as it now is," said Frank.

"No."

"I have an idea."

"What is it?"

"We cannot prevent the dhows from coming up the river and attacking us with their cannon."

"No."

"But we can give them a battle royal."

"How?"

"You forget that I have two powerful electric guns."

"Ah, that is so!"

"In case they are not struck or ruined by the cannon balls of the dhows, I think I can blow the piratical vessels out of the water. But on the other hand, one cannon ball from the foe might destroy the Vendetta and render the guns useless."

"In that case the colony would be wholly at the mercy of the foe?"

"Yes."

"It would seem almost folly to fight."

"Yet it is the only resource, unless you abandon the field."

"No, no! We must never do that. Let us fight!" cried Van Dyke, heroically. "It will be another case of the Spartans at Thermopylæ. But let us fight and die!"

"I am with you!" declared Frank, resolutely. "I will stick by you just as long as you will by me!"

"And that is until death!"

"Good! Let us to work!"

"What is your first plan?"

"To build some kind of breastworks or defense about the town."

Then McFadden was called in and the fact stated to him.

The Irish leader did not hesitate.

At once a committee of safety was appointed. A line of defense was agreed upon.

The Mamboulis were enlisted in the cause, and work began.

It was not known just how soon the attack might be expected.

The Tipperary, which was the sailing vessel's name, was waiting in the basin ready to sail.

But it was not deemed safe to allow her to proceed down the river.

At any moment the slavers' dhows might be encountered, and the Tipperary would surely be sunk.

Half a thousand Mamboulis were at once put to work with rude implements to dig a ditch upon a rise of land at the end of the neck.

From here the whole harbor could be commanded.

Frank was decided to ensconce the Vendetta, with guns behind this breastwork.

Its length was to be fully a quarter of a mile, and was to be in the shape of a horseshoe.

Behind this the whole force of colonists were to shelter with their ammunition and weapons of defense.

As the preparations went on Frank became greatly encouraged.

"I tell you," he said to Van Dyke, "we shall give them a big fight."

"I believe we will," agreed Van Dyke.

The Mamboulis proved themselves invaluable as allies.

They worked like Trojans and were ever on the alert. Swift runners were sent out in all directions to watch and bring news of the approach of an enemy.

The greatest effort was made to at once complete the defenses.

Reports now came thick and fast of the action of the foe as the days passed.

It was rumored that they were coming to the attack from far and near.

It was a general uprising of several thousand pirates and slave traders of all nationalities up and down the coast of Africa for several hundred miles.

It was believed that Hardinger was the leading spirit.

Then the startling report came that the slave dhows were congregating at the mouth of the Mambouli river.

The fortifications were yet but half done.

The workmen were pushed to the greatest extremity. Every moment now was valuable indeed.

Thus matters were when early one morning the thrilling alarm sounded.

Those who were astir rushed to the fortification, to see a white sail appear at the lower end of the basin.

Then the distant dull boom of a cannon was heard.

"The enemy are coming!" was the cry raised.

The Mamboulis in full war dress swarmed from the village.

The colonists rushed to arms.

The women and children were safely ensconced far up the mountain side and out of the reach of the guns, and with a bodyguard to protect them.

Then the coming of the foe was eagerly awaited.

Up into the basin came the slave dhows.

They were fiendish, piratical-looking crafts.

Many a crime had been committed on board them, many a poor wretch had died in chains between their decks.

The white colonists all thought of this as they stood upon the ramparts and watched the foe.

one of the, Jr.'s eyes flashed.
 "If it is in my power," he declared, "I will sink every
 vessel and kill every man of that gang!"

"It would be a mercy to do so!" declared Van Dyke.

The slave dhows, full twenty in number, were now in
 the basin.

The booming of their cannon was terrific, and balls came
 raining overhead or tearing up the earth around.

Of course the colonists could do nothing but wait.

They had no cannon save the electric guns of Frank
 Reade, Jr.'s, and he had not got ready yet to use them.

But now a new contingency arose.

A wild yell of alarm came from the Mamboulis who were
 posted upon the plain to guard against a land attack.

Frank at once realized what this meant. The dhows had
 detached a force just below and before entering the basin.

These were advancing to attack the fortifications by land.
 Assailed upon all sides the position of the colonists was
 critical indeed.

What was to be done?

The Mamboulis were preparing to resist the land attack.
 Their pluck was certainly good, but they were clearly
 outmatched.

They could not hope to cope successfully with the slavers
 armed as they were with modern weapons.

Frank Reade, Jr., saw this.

The land force were several hundred strong and were
 marching along the shore of the basin.

Frank smiled grimly and waited until they got within
 six-sixth of a mile from the settlement.

Thus far not a shot had been fired by the colonists.

Naturally they were beginning to feel alarmed.

Van Dyke ventured to intimate this to Frank.

"What do you think?" he asked, anxiously. "Ought
 we to wait longer?"

"No!" said Frank, decidedly. "The time has come for
 action."

With this he sprang aboard the Vendetta.

He brought the machine about so that the forward electric
 gun pointed down the sandy shore.

Then he drew a careful line upon the foe.

As he glanced over the sight, even at that distance, Frank
 could almost see the expression of their dark, vindictive
 faces.

He knew that a battle at close quarters with these vil-
 lains would be a most disastrous thing.

He drew careful aim, and then pushed the electric lever.

Whirr—swish—ping! then a line of lightning blaze rose

into the air from the spot where the slavers were, and a
 thunderous roar followed.

Up into the air for a hundred feet arose a cloud of sand,
 dust, and the flying bodies of men were seen everywhere.

Frank had thrust another projectile into the breech of
 the gun ready to use.

But the smoke cleared away and a scene of the wildest
 confusion was revealed.

The slavers, as if pursued by fiends, were flying for their
 lives.

In a few moments not one of them was in sight.

They sought shelter in the jungle near. The coast was
 clear most certainly in that direction.

A wild cheer went up from the defenders of the fort.

The Mamboulis took up the echo and went in pursuit
 of the foe.

"That settles the case for them," said Frank, coolly.

The colonists could hardly believe their senses.

"Bejabbers, I niver see the loikes av such a gun as that
 afore!" declared Rourke.

"Nor I mesilf," averred O'Brien.

"We shall whip them out of their boots!" cried Van
 Dyke, in an elated manner.

But at that moment a cannon ball came tearing across
 the ramparts and struck the Vendetta with fearful force.

CHAPTER XII.

WHIPPING THE SLAVERS.

The cannon ball struck the Vendetta just in the shell
 and passed completely through, tearing away the bridge
 and a part of the dome.

For a moment the utmost confusion reigned.

The hopes of the colonists fell.

Van Dyke was ashen pale.

"My God! We are lost, Frank!" he gasped.

But the young inventor was as cool as an icicle.

"Go into the pilot-house, Barney!" he commanded.

The Celt obeyed.

By Frank's orders the Vendetta was run to the very
 verge of the ramparts.

Here it was halted in a position to allow the muzzle of
 the electric gun to be above them.

This exposed the upper half of the Vendetta, and it
 instantly became a target for the guns of the dhows.

Cannon balls came thick as hail.

In most cases, too, the aim was deadly. In less than
 three minutes the entire top of the Vendetta was shot away.

But as yet no harm had been done to the machinery or
 to the electric gun.

Quite fortunately the slavers did not seem to have any shells.

Frank, through all, was cool and calm.

Amid the storm of cannon balls he never lost his nerve.

"My turn will come!" he muttered, grimly.

Not two hundred yards from the breastworks a dhow had ventured up and was shooting cannon balls within a few inches of the electric gun.

Of course it was apt at any moment to strike it.

In that event all would be up.

Frank knew this.

He coolly sighted the gun and pressed the lever.

The next moment there was a volcanic display in the basin.

The dynamite projectile had struck the dhow just amidships.

Up into the air a hundred feet or more rose a column of water and debris.

It was like a mighty cataract, and great clouds of spray fell over other dhows which were near.

In a moment the cataract fell.

There upon the surface of the water was a confused heap of timbers.

It was all that was left of the dhow. Every man on board had gone up with that explosion.

Not one had escaped.

A great tidal wave swept across the basin and rocked the other vessels. For a moment they forgot to work their guns.

One of the dhows had been disposed of in a few seconds.

But there were nineteen left.

Frank Reade, Jr., however, was well aware of this fact.

Before the debris of the first explosion had settled he had another projectile in the breech.

One more aim he took.

Two dhows, just to the right, lay side by side.

Frank saw the opportunity.

He pulled the electric lever.

Whirr—boom!

The second projectile struck just between these two vessels.

They were instantly lifted high in air and tipped bottom side up.

Their sterns were blown in and they went down almost instantly.

Seventeen of the dhows were yet left.

The cheers which went up from the fort were furious.

The slavers seemed to be dumfounded. They had seen three of their vessels disposed of in the most sudden and startling manner. What did it mean?

For a moment the cannonade ceased.

But it was quickly resumed.

Evidently they regarded it as lucky shots upon the part of the defenders.

A storm of cannon balls now came tearing up the earthworks.

All this while Frank had been cool as could be.

He knew that if no harm came to his electric gun that he could proceed and blow every one of the dhows into eternity.

Once again he drew aim.

This time he waited to get a line upon two ships near together.

The chance came.

Then he drew careful aim and once more discharged the pneumatic gun.

The dynamite projectile this time sank both of the ships.

Five of the dhows lay at the bottom of the basin.

Matters were getting thrilling and alarming to the slavers. They were astounded at the ease with which their ships were disposed of.

But there were yet fifteen of their vessels left.

Such a thing as abandoning the fight did not occur to them.

But this was just what Frank Reade, Jr., wanted.

He hoped to destroy every one of the fleet of slave ships. He meant to send every one of them to the bottom.

The next shot proved the best of all.

The projectile crushed in the stern of one ship, pierced the hull of another and raised such a mountain of water that the wreck crashed into a third dhow and sunk it also.

Only twelve out of the twenty slave ships remained.

This was wholesale destruction with a vengeance.

The pirates evidently began to realize that they had an antagonist of no mean sort to deal with.

Suddenly they ceased firing and a white flag was run up. A cry of joy escaped Van Dyke.

"Surrender!" he exclaimed.

"No," said Frank Reade, Jr., "that is only a trick."

"A trick?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean?"

"They simply want to gain time. They want to locate us if possible, and find out our strength."

"Do you believe it?"

"Of course I do."

"But—you will grant the truce?"

"Oh, yes!"

One of the dhows now drew near to the shore and a man was seen in the rigging.

To the surprise of the defenders it was seen to be Hardinger.

"The villain!" exclaimed Van Dyke, sententiously. "What does he want?"

"Fort ahoy!" came the hail.

"Well?" returned Frank from a loophole. He did not expose himself, for he knew the treacherous character of his foe.

"We want to offer you terms."

"What are they?"

"Will you surrender?"

"No."

"We will give you your lives if you leave this country. The Mamboulis are our property."

"You lie!" returned Frank, contemptuously. "They are free as you or anybody else. We will never leave this country."

"You won't, eh?"

"No."

"Then we'll batter you all to pieces. We have twelve ships left, you see."

"You won't have any left when I get through with you."

Frank placed his hand upon the breech of the electric gun. His eyes flashed.

"Oh, how I'd like to blow that wretch into eternity!" he yelled.

"I hope you will," said Van Dyke.

Again Hardinger called:

"I want to come up there and talk with ye."

"No, you won't!" replied Frank.

"What! Ye won't treat?"

"Never! There is only one thing that will save you, and that is to get out of here just as quick as you can. There will be hardly time for one of your ships to get out of this basin before I can blow you all up with my electric gun!"

"Oh, then, that's an electric gun ye've got?"

"Yes."

"Waal, I'll be durned! Ye've got the devil to aid ye! I'll live to skin ye alive!"

"No, you won't!" gritted Frank.

This ended the parley.

The white flag went down, and instantly Frank opened

He was bound to assume the aggressive now, and it was his firm purpose to, if possible, rid the earth of the entire trading gang.

He would never consider it murder, and knew that he was justified in the deed.

So he loaded and fired the electric gun just as rapidly as he could.

The Irish colonists were wild with delight.

It was evident that the slave gang had given up the battle.

They were not firing a single gun, and every dhow was crowding on sail to get out of the basin.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" yelled the victorious colonists.

"They're beaten! See 'em run!"

Frank had but one all-consuming idea.

This was to sink every ship in the slavers' fleet. Shot after shot he launched after them.

And every shot counted.

If it struck the water within twenty feet of a dhow the vessel was doomed, for the cataract would sink it.

With mad haste and terror the defeated slavers now tried to force their way out of the basin.

But so expeditiously did Frank work that only three of them succeeded in doing this.

The waters of the basin were alive with wreckage and drifting hulks. Frank had the satisfaction of sinking the dhow aboard of which was Hardinger.

A more complete or awful defeat could not be imagined.

The power of the slave traders in that region was certainly broken forever. This was certainly a matter for great rejoicing.

The delight of the Irish colonists and the Mamboulis could not be expressed in words.

But fortune had favored the defenders of the fort in one respect.

The dynamite projectiles had lasted just long enough to win the victory.

Also, the concussion of the last shot had wrecked the delicate machinery of the Vendetta.

The machine itself was totally riddled by the cannon balls of the slavers.

"But you can repair it?" asked Van Dyke, anxiously.

Frank made a critical examination of the machine.

His decision was ultimate.

"No!" he said. "I have not the tools here to do it with."

"What will you do?"

"We shall have to go back to the coast on foot."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE END.

"What?" exclaimed Van Dyke, in dismay. "And leave the Vendetta here?"

"Even so."

"But that is too bad!"

"Oh, I don't know," said Frank, lightly. "She has accomplished the purpose we brought her here for. I believe the backbone of the slave trade in this region is broken."

"But the loss to you?"

"Pshaw! I will make it up. I shall proceed with a new invention which I already have in mind."

"You will?" cried Van Dyke, eagerly. "Will you promise to take me with you upon the next trip?"

Frank laughed lightly.

"I can't do that," he said. "The future is indefinite."

Frank's prediction that all trouble with the slavers was over forever proved to be most true.

News came some days later that awful consternation had spread up and down the coast owing to Hardinger's defeat.

No more slavers appeared in the Mambouli country. The Irish colony was now safe from all such danger.

The gratitude of all was due and awarded to Frank Reade, Jr.

He had certainly saved the colony and the native tribe from ruin and death.

But the mission of the young inventor and his party in Africa was over.

They thought now of home, and preparations were made for leaving New Erin.

This was greatly deprecated by the colonists.

"Mr. Reade," declared McFadden, with emotion, "if we had a man like you in our midst we would soon be the greatest nation on the earth. We could conquer the whole world!"

Frank modestly protested against such expressions as these.

It had been arranged that upon a certain date the Yankee Girl, Captain Haynes' steamer, should return to the place upon the coast where the travelers had landed.

This time was drawing nigh.

Frank was also anxious to get home.

He had many duties to attend to there and was also eager to begin work upon his new invention.

So preparations were made accordingly.

One of the Tipperary's boats were to take them down the river to the coast. There they would wait for the Yankee Girl.

But at the last moment a surprise was in store.

Van Dyke announced his intention of remaining in the colony.

"What?" exclaimed Frank Reade, Jr., with sly amusement. "I thought you wanted to go with me upon next expedition!"

"I am afraid I shall have to decline!" said Van Dyke.

He blushed to the roots of his hair.

Barney leaned over and whispered an explanation to Frank's ear.

It seemed that Van Dyke had become suddenly smitten with Nelly McFadden, the colonist's beautiful daughter.

He had asked her hand in marriage, and they were going to make their home forever in New Erin.

"Well," said Frank, heartily, "I wish you luck and happiness. I hope that New Erin will outstrip old Ireland."

The colonists cheered this sentiment to the echo.

Then the boat dropped down the stream.

The journey to the coast was without incident. Two days later the Yankee Girl arrived and the party went aboard.

Barring the loss of the Vendetta their trip had been a success. Certainly much of a gratifying nature had been accomplished in breaking the power of slavery on the Mambouli river.

In due course of time Frank Reade, Jr., Barney and Pomp arrived home in Readestown.

But they were not soon to forget their exciting adventures with the Vendetta in Africa.

Barney always spoke wistfully of New Erin. The Irish colonists are prospering, and, perhaps some day their cherished plans may succeed.

"I jes' likes Africky, I does!" declared Pomp.

"Begorra, so do I!" averred Barney.

"Keep cool!" said Frank. "Perhaps we may go there again some day!"

THE END.

Read "FROM ZONE TO ZONE; OR, THE WONDERFUL TRIP OF FRANK READE, JR., WITH HIS LATEST AIRSHIP," which will be the next number of "Frank Reade Weekly Magazine."

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